

Presentation for
**The Joint Legislative
Committee on Aging**

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at Texas A&M University
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PATHS

Postsecondary Access and
Training in Human Services



Center on Disability & Development
at Texas A&M University

ATM | **EDUCATION**
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What is PATHS?

PATHS is a two semester Certificate Program which provides exceptional training to prepare students to be Direct Support Professionals.

The Certificate is offered by the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University in College Station.

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Background Information

Need to develop exceptionally trained workforce to support older Texans and people with disabilities.

Anecdotal stories of people with Intellectual Disabilities supporting Older people to live at home.

Advocacy Driven: Meet need for direct support professionals and employ people with disabilities.

2010: Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) initial partner/funded program development.

2011: First PATHS Class (pilot) begins at Texas A&M University.

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What is a Direct Support Professional?

A person who supports other people with disabilities and older people to live in their communities.

A Direct Support Professional sees their work as a career, not just a job.

A Direct Support Professional actively uses person centered tools and practices when supporting others.

A Direct Support Professional believes and practices equity in relationship with the people they support.

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What is a Direct Support Professional?

A Direct Support Professional seeks additional training opportunities.

A Direct Support Professional listens carefully to behavior and discovers what the person is communicating and how best to support the person.

A Direct Support Professional creates opportunities for the person they support to build relationships with others based on what is important to that person.

A Direct Support Professional seeks every opportunity to support a person to be seen as a valued member of their community

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What is a Direct Support Professional?

A Direct Support Professional has successfully completed intensive training that includes and exceeds mandated state training.

A Direct Support Professional is an active member of the planning team for the person they support, if invited.

A Direct Support Professional leads by example.

A Direct Support Professional values all people and is sensitive to the cultural differences of others.

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Curriculum

- The Institute on Person Centered Practices
(Collaborative between Texas A&M and the University of Texas)
- Instruction from Field Experts
- Site observations of numerous settings
- Bethesda Learning Institute
- College of Direct Support
(University of Minnesota Center on Community Integration).

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Instruction

- Universal Design
- Small Group Work and Assignments
- Classroom Instruction
- Student Advisors
- Tutors
- Mentors
- Competency Determination: Weekly Lessons, Site Observation Reports, Midterm and Final Presentations, class participation, professional standards
- Demonstrated Competency at Practicum

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First Semester Overview

- 12 Weeks of Classroom Instruction: 8:30-12:30 daily
- Weekly Social/Cultural Activity
- 6 Site Observations
- Weekly meetings with Advisors
- Support as needed from Brazos Valley Independent Living Center

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Paid Practicum

- Paid Practicum (all students paid more than minimum wage during their practicum)
- At least 15 hours per week
- Weekly Advisor Observation/Meetings to demonstrate competency
- Ongoing meetings with Site Supervisor
- Practicum Agreements with 5 statewide providers of Home and Community Based Services and 1 Home Health Care Agency

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Admissions Process

Submission of Application

High School Degree/GED

No Criminal Record
(Background Checks)

2 References

Essay from Applicant

Volunteer experiences

Paid and Unpaid Work
Experiences

Experiences supporting others
with disabilities or the elderly

Interview with PATHS
Development Team

Funding Review

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Admission Decision Criteria

Timely submission of all
materials

Pass criminal background
check

Review of volunteer, paid
work and experiences
supporting others with
disabilities

Review of references

Review of student essays

Face to Face interviews

Follow through with
expectations

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Student Background Information

- 4 Students from outside of Brazos County
- 9 Funded through DARS
- 1 Funded through partial scholarship
- Represented wide range of abilities, disabilities, and learning styles: Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, and Cerebral Palsy.
- Focus on learning style, not disability.
- Diversity in age, sex, heritage and economic status.

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Outcomes

10 Students started the class in Fall 2011.

9 Students passed the first semester.

9 Students placed in paid practicum sites.

8 Students will pass practicum and graduate.

4 Students will remain employed at practicum site.

4 Students will return home and are currently pursuing
employment.

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Practicum Settings

3 students placed with Home Health Provider

4 students placed with Home and Community Based
Provider (2 in small group homes and 2 in day habilitation settings)

1 student placed supporting graduated student who uses a
wheelchair using Consumer Directed Services.

1 student placed at the Brazos Valley Independent Living
Center.

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What We Learned

Admissions process appeared to work in terms of admitting people who really have a desire to work as a DSP.

People with a broad range of learning styles and supports are able to demonstrate competency in required coursework.

Provider Partners are willing to serve as practicum sites and make accommodations.

Provider Partners see the potential cost benefits of employing PATHS graduates: training, applicant screening and commitment to a career.

** Important to note this is a small sample of people.*



PATHS Students – Class of 2012

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On the Horizon

National Accreditation from
the National Alliance for
Direct Support Professionals

Development of Partnerships
with Providers to offer
training for current staff

Year Around Program

Recruit students with
Intellectual and other

Distance Learning

Developmental Disabilities

Instructional Technology
Services (Online Learning)

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Bridge to Career In Human Services Project

- Project will serve as a “net” of support for PATHS students with more significant disabilities.
- Develop Person Centered Plan to identify specific supports
- Students move to campus in July for orientation to the community
- Housing and other significant supports
- Funded through a grant with the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
- Identify and develop wraparound team for support

Bridge to Career in Human Services is a postsecondary certificate program offered by the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A& M University. It is supported by a grant from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. TCDD/ \$225,000 and TAMU/CDD \$80,476

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For Legislators to Consider

- Work with the Texas Workforce Commission to recognize Direct Support Professionals (PCAs, Direct Support Staff) as a position which requires training and allow PATHS and other programs to become training vendors.
- Explore options for Older Texans to use Consumer Directed Services to employ highly trained Direct Support Professionals and allow Consumers to set fees based on a rate range.
- Study potential cost savings from decreased turnover.
- Study potential changes in quality of life indicators.
- Raise the level of training requirements and education requirements while incentivizing Providers to employ Direct Support Professionals.